

# One Person at a Time

KENTUCKY OFFICE FOR THE BLIND **State Rehabilitation Council** 

# 2008 Annual Report

Department for Workforce Investment **Education and Workforce Development Cabinet** 

### State Rehabilitation Council Focus Areas for 2008



In 2007 the Council made a recommendation for the agency to produce a Public Service Announcement (PSA) that would be a marketing mechanism to increase public awareness of services. The committee worked with agency staff on the development and production of the PSA. The Office of Creative Services handled the production and distribution of the PSA. The PSA was released in mid October to over

ten (10) Kentucky television stations and thirty-one (31) cable companies and fifty (50) radio stations.

he Triennial Statewide Needs Assessment was the main project of the State Rehabilitation Council in 2008. The Special Projects Committee of the SRC focused on the design and conducting of the statewide needs assessment with the assistance of Dr. Ron Milliman, Professor of Marketing, Western Kentucky University who serves on the council. The SRC will conduct four (4) focus groups through the various advocacy organizations across the state. Surveys were designed that were specific to the different specialty areas for staff, consumers and their families, community rehabilitation providers, and eye physicians.

Satisfaction Survey Results for the prior year were presented to the Council by the Human Development Institute of the University of Kentucky in May of 2008.

The Council reviewed the results and identified service trends for consideration. The survey yielded a 76% rating of very good to excellent for overall quality of services.

### State Rehabilitation Council Members

William Deatherage
Mike Harrod
Scott Trimble
Frank Cameron
Mitchell Dahmke
Darrell Buford
Dr. Ron Milliman
Dr. Robert Mackey
Juda Potter
Shannon Caldwell
Gerry Gordon-Brown
Cecil Cox

Joey Couch
Paul Weise
Kenny Jones
James Shaw
Charles Allen
Morry LaTour
Adam Ruschival
Larry Sherman
Gerry Slusher
Tim Huff
Dr. Freda Shipman
Eugene Willis

# "A central theme... the success of each and every visually impaired consumer"

he State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is comprised of consumers, business leaders, rehabilitation specialists, and concerned citizens, working with the Office for the Blind. Their sole mission is to improve the quality of life and enhance the educational and employment opportunities of the visually impaired, across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Darrell L. Buford, SRC Chairman

The SRC has six standing committees that carry out its work. The Nominating Committee worked throughout the year to recruit members who met specific requirements, as designated in the Bylaws. This past year, as in previous years, the SRC experienced a smooth transition in membership and a seamless succession of Council leadership.

Other examples of committee activity are:

- Special Projects Committee: Oversight of the client satisfaction surveys, grant requests, and public forums.
- Legislative Committee: Advocacy efforts.
- Public Relations Committee: Attendance at or sponsorship of conferences, transition weekends, client-family activities, public service announcements, and production of brochures.
- Business Opportunities Committee: Exploring avenues of employment and training options available to consumers.
- Bylaws Committee: Ongoing examination and upgrading of the legal and operating statues, regulations, and rules of order.

An Executive Committee comprised of the Council Chair, Vice-Chair, and Immediate Past Chair, is in place to steer the SRC between its regularly scheduled quarterly meetings. The Office for the Blind and the SRC have collaborated effectively and amicably with the Commonwealth's governmental administration in arranging Council appointments and in attention to SRC recommendations. This

positive cooperation is due in part to the backgrounds, knowledge and involvement of SRC members and agency staff in the blindness rehabilitation area as well as participation in consumer and professional organizations. SRC members and OFB staff have one goal in mind, to challenge each individual consumer to reach their fullest potential, and educate society as to the possible assets, today's visually impaired consumer, bring to society as a whole.

Although, economic uncertainty has impacted Kentucky's state budget negatively, the Office for the Blind and the SRC has through its dedicated staff been able to maintain an extremely high quality of service and even expanded programs, because of a central theme, "the success of each and every visually impaired consumer, statewide".

Darrell L Buford SRC Chairman



# Our Mission . . .

# Our mission is to provide opportunities for employment and independence to individuals with visual disabilities.

Consistent with the purpose and principles of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Office for the Blind has established the following program principles:

- We value our consumers and respect their individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and right to privacy.
- We presume that our consumers, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of engaging in competitive employment.
- We believe that to meet quality employment outcomes, specialized services of the highest quality such as rehabilitation teaching, assistive technology, and orientation and mobility are essential for individuals who are blind.
- We believe our consumers must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs, including making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals, objectives, and services they receive.
- We are committed to our responsibility to provide consumers with program information in an accessible format, including Braille, audio recording, and large print.
- We value our staff of qualified rehabilitation professionals and believe they can facilitate the accomplishment of consumers' employment goals and objectives.

These principles were developed in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council and Office for the Blind staff with input from consumers and other interested parties.

# Serving this many individuals can only be accomplished through excellence!

t is my privilege to present the Kentucky office for the Blind (OFB) 2008 Annual Report, developed in collaboration with the OFB State Rehabilitation Council

Agency services in 2008 reflected the mission of the Office for the Blind. The past 12 months were very productive for both staff and consumers. In 2008, a total of 2,993 blind or visually impaired individuals received services from OFB. Providing opportunities for employment and independence to individuals with visual disabilities is the Mission of the Office for the Blind. We believe categorical services are imperative in order for blind Kentuckians to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence. OFB provides specialized services through the Independent Living Program, Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Charles McDowell Rehabilitation Center, Bioptic Driving Program, Business Enterprises and the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services Network.

Serving this many individuals can only be accomplished through excellence! I want to say congratulations to the dedicated OFB staff, the State Rehabilitation Council and all our partners throughout the Commonwealth.

Beth Cross Executive Director



**Beth Cross, Executive Director** 

# 2,993 blind or visually impaired Kentuckians were served in 2007

394 successfully employed

43 served by the Deaf/Blind Program

1,118 worked toward a vocational goal

1,298 served by the Independent Living Program

64 vendors served by Kentucky Business Enterprises

76 Accessible Text Book Program



# Office for the Blind Programs and Services

he Kentucky Office for the Blind (OFB) offers a wide variety of programs and services to assist Kentuckians with visual disabilities. These programs and services are designed to give individuals the tools they need to become more independent and productive in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities. OFB also partners with business and industry by helping employers hire qualified blind individuals or retain valued employees who have sustained vision loss.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Program
   Assists individuals who are blind or visually impaired achieve their employment goals
- Independent Living Program
  Assists individuals who are blind or
  visually impaired to function independently
  in their homes and the community
- Deaf Blind Program
   Consumers with dual disabilities are offered specialized services to meet their needs
- SEE World
   A low-vision products store located in the Charles W. McDowell Center, Louisville
- Charles W. McDowell
   Rehabilitation Center
   A state-of-the-art facility offering a variety
   of comprehensive training opportunities

### 2008 Annual Report

### KY Assistive Technology Service Network (KATS)

Assists individuals of any age and/or disability in finding and using appropriate Technology

### Business Enterprises

Trains and places individuals for selfemployment in vending and food service facilities

### Bioptic Driving Program

Provides specialized training to qualified individuals to obtain a drivers license

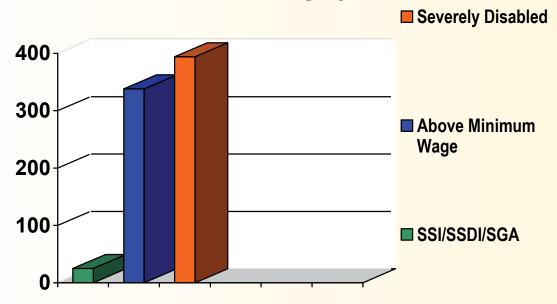
# Accessible Textbook Program Provides audio versions of books for students and others with a vision loss



### Office for the Blind Funding

As a result of categorized services to individuals in 2008, The Office for the Blind had 394 successful employment outcomes, a 5% increase over the prior year. The chart below shows a comparison of the successful outcomes categories for the 394 individuals that reached successful closure in 2008.

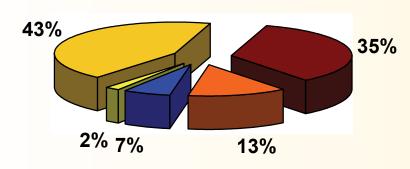




### Office for the Blind Service Categories

In 2008, OFB had 1,630 open VR active cases and served 1,298 active IL cases. Consumers receive categorized services based on their individual needs in Orientation and Mobility, Assistive Technology and Bioptic Driving. In addition, 186 individuals were served through the Accessible Textbook program and 43 through Deaf Blind Services.

# Office for the Blind Service Categories



- ☐ Active VR Cases
- Independent Living
- Assistive Technology
- Orientation and Mobility
- Bipotic Driving

# Vocational Rehabilitation Program

OFB provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with visual impairments assisting them in obtaining and maintaining gainful employment. Services are consistent with the individual's strengths, abilities, and interests allowing them the opportunity to make informed choices regarding their employment goals.

Provided services to 2,993 consumers in 2008

Services may include:

- Diagnostics and evaluations
- On-the-job training
- Counseling and guidance
- Job placement assistance
- Vocational Training
- Bioptic driving training
- Employer services
- Supported employment
- Work Experience
- Orientation and Mobility
- Medical treatments, surgery & therapy
- Transition services
- Rehabilitation technology & consultations
- Interpreter services
- Occupational license, tools & equipment



# Partnerships

### Affiliated Computer Services

ACS, a global FORTUNE 500 company with 65,000 people supporting client operations reaching more than 100 countries, provides business process outsourcing and information technology solutions to world-class commercial and government clients. ACS is one of the largest private employers in Kentucky, employing more than 4000 people. ACS provides ongoing training to employees and managers regarding hiring, managing, supporting and promoting people with disabilities.

ACS recruiter, Carla Webster worked with OFB counselors and consumers to identify their unique work skills and how they can best be utilized. This included modifying a pre-employment test to identify alternative technology that makes the testing process more accessible for the blind and visually impaired. Recruiters provided OFB counselors with the tools to conduct the testing at their offices. This ensured that consumers had the accommodations they needed while ACS gained a larger applicant pool.

Nationally, ACS has established a network of more than 300 agencies across the country that support people with disabilities, like the Office for the Blind, who refer appropriate candidates to ACS for possible hiring. More than 160 people have been hired through this initiative since a pilot program began in March.

"ACS is proud of our efforts to hire people with disabilities," said Lora Villarreal, executive vice president and chief people officer for ACS. "We are honored to receive the 2008 Partnership of the



Year Award. This award symbolizes our commitment to giving all people an opportunity, no matter how society chooses to label them.

We look beyond the label and directly at the individual." OFB looks forward to partnering with ACS in order to ensure that more individuals with disabilities will benefit from this initiative.

# Partnerships

### Hazelwood Center

The Hazelwood Center is part of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addiction Services providing intermediate care to persons with severe to profound developmental disabilities. Adrienne Higgins, an Office for the Blind consumer, had worked at Hazelwood as an Occupational Therapist for nine years when her vision suddenly deteriorated and required retinal surgery.

Throughout the process, Hazelwood Human Resource Director, Jim Coleman, stayed in close communication with Donna Hoover, Facility Director, as well as, Cabinet level management. They recognized that their employee, Adrienne Higgins, was a very skilled and valued employee. She acknowledged that she wanted to remain at Hazelwood as she loved the facility and the important work done there to help persons with severe disabilities. Everyone agreed that her vision had deteriorated so that she would not be able to continue in her position as Occupational Therapist.

After discussion with Marjorie Payne of the EEO Compliance Branch in CHFS, Mr. Coleman inquired if the Office for the Blind could provide a skills assessment indicating Adrienne's current abilities/training needs and assist in her job search – possibly for something administrative. Ms. Jenny Tyree, OFB's Assistive Technology Specialist, conducted an assessment and provided training recommendations. The training allowed Adrienne to learn critical screen reading software

Annual Report and navigation skills so
that she could use the
computer and transition
from hands-on therapy
to an administrative
or training role. The



**Adrienne Higgins** 

management of Hazelwood was extraordinary in willingness to explore and address transition needs. As a result in June of 2008, Adrienne began her new position as Staff Development and Training Specialist at the Hazelwood Center.

The entire management staff of Hazelwood Center deserves commendation for their efforts in determining what services would be required to transition Adrienne to a different job and then providing those services and the job opportunity. Both Adrienne and the Hazelwood Center exemplify what can happen when the employer, OFB and the employee comes together to coordinate exceptional effort in order to maintain the employment of a dedicated professional.

# Vocational Achievement Awards

arah Sherk is legally blind due to a congenital condition. Sarah met with OFB Counselor Nancy Tooley and became a consumer of the agency while

attending Edmonson County
High School in 1997. Sarah
attended classes at the Charles
McDowell Center and the
Kentucky School for the
Blind's summer program to
assist her in gaining new skills.
The next step in Sarah's path
to independence and a future
career was finding the right
college for Sarah to attend.
Sarah made the decision to
attend Lindsey Wilson College
where she was successful
academically and socially.



Sarah Sherk

While in college she received assistance from many OFB staff including O&M training from Tim Nelson and AT equipment from Dorothy Brame. After a couple of years at Lindsey

Wilson, Sarah began working with Chad Hunt who took over her case in 2001. Like most college students, she changed her vocational goal several times finally settling on a career goal of counseling. Upon completion of a Master's degree from Lindsey Wilson College she completed an internship with Grey Counseling Service. She was hired by them and continues to be successfully employed at Grey Counseling Service today.

s a result of a car accident, Rob Pedigo acquired a spinal cord injury that requires him to use a wheelchair. After undergoing surgery, he became legally blind. He attended college for a period of time, but he did not finish his degree. Over the years, OFB assisted him with job search, but he never quite got to the place in his life where he could follow through with this goal. In 2006, Rob purchased a home and indicated that he would like to go to work. Rob and his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Janell Turner working together identified EDS, a company that provides business and technology solutions to its clients. They were advertising openings for customer service representatives. Through networking, Rob was able to secure an interview with Volt Services, a staffing agency that assists EDS with filling their openings. His counselor met with the On-site Employment Coordinator for Volt to arrange

for OFB Assistive Technology Specialists, Jenny Tyree and Brenda Eadens, to test the compatibility of JAWS with EDS's software. After some minor adjustments, Rob became an EDS employee. Rob is active in his community as a YMCA basketball coach and a radio color commentator for George Rogers Clark High School boy's basketball

team in
Winchester. This
year he married
his fiancée
Jessica. Through
his hard work,
Rob has been
able to overcome
the barriers
placed in front
of him and is
living the life
that others only
dream about.



Rob Pedigo

# Independent Living Program Provided service consumers is

Provided services to 1,298 consumers in 2008

r. Tilford Underwood exemplifies the success of hard work, determination, a positive attitude and independent living in the face of vision loss. Mr. Underwood was diagnosed with Glaucoma at 12 years old. He participated in sports such as baseball and basketball until he was no longer able to see the ball. Despite these obstacles in his life, Mr. Underwood was able to stay positive in his mindset. Mr. Underwood continued his education after his vision changed graduating from high school and Murray State

University with degree in Agriculture and a teaching certification in Agriculture from University of



Tilford Underwood

Kentucky. Mr. Underwood then taught for many years in Munfordville, Kentucky and ending at Murray State University. During his years teaching he was offered and accepted a position as supervisor of education, assistant superintendent, and superintendent in the McCracken County school system. He finally retired from his last teaching position at Murray State University. Today Mr. Underwood is enjoying his retirement. He has been an avid golfer for many years. Despite his vision loss, Mr. Tilford continues to live his life indepen-

dently and he is an inspiration to all for his hard work and determination.



Lena Barrett

ena Barrett came to the Office for the Blind in Bowling Green in March 2008 to inquire about equipment she had heard about from another source. The referral/application process began, a home assessment was completed. Very quickly it was apparent that in addition to Lena's vision loss, that was a result of macular degenera-

tion, she was having difficulty due to a hearing loss. Although she was wearing hearing aids, communication was difficult. Independent Living Program Manger, Gay Pannell provided her a pocket talker to assist with her hearing. Exhibiting the same "do what it takes" attitude that she has applied all her life, she quickly adapted to using the pocket talker. Lena has eagerly participated in a variety of training areas, and the best part is, she practices her new skills with a whole hearted determination. If a new idea was even so much as suggested during a training session, Lena ran with it, incorporating that method or information into her overall skills and knowledge base. For example, zoom text was mentioned as a way she might better use her computer. As a result, she independently purchased the software, loaded it on her computer and began using it. Her latest acquisition is an Acrobat CCTV. Lena is a "can do" person, a cancer survivor, and was honored as a Kentucky Colonel by Gov. Wendell Ford. In spite of her hearing and vision loss, Lena continues to face obstacles in the same determined manner as all other hardships have been faced....head on.

# Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center

he Charles W. McDowell Center is named after a man whose accomplishments speak for themselves. Charles W. McDowell (1937-1992), earned a reputation as an outstanding teacher and educator. History will probably record that his greatest achievement for the agency was the development of technological advances and computer adaptations for people with visual disabilities. It is fitting that the McDowell Center bears his name. He said he wanted it to be a monument to all Kentuckians with visual disabilities—a center where the services provided would improve opportunities for living

Provided services to 121 consumers in 2008

### See World A Low-Vision Product Store

As a result of the internet See World has global exposure serving 3,108 individuals. In 2008 See World received notoriety in Hollywood. One of the stores products was featured in the movie "The Bucket List" when Jack Nicholson wears a pair of the bed spectacles in one of its scenes. Bed spectacles allow a user to read or write or view television while lying down. Sales for bed spectacles increased dramatically this past year as a result of their exposure in the movie. This is only one of many products the store has available. "See" World is open to the public with store hours of 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and is also available online at Seeworld.ky.gov.

independently and obtaining employment.
The Charles W.
McDowell Center continues to carry out his vision. In 2008 there were 15 major programmatic changes under the 21st Century MAC project. Under



this project, changes were made in order to meet the needs of individuals who are blind and visually impaired. The training opportunities at the Rehabilitation center are designed to promote independence, family education, problem solving techniques, and employability that assist individuals in achieving their highest potential in career and personal goals.

# "SEE" World Low-Vision Products Store

Kentucky Office for the Blind Charles W. McDowell Center 8412 Westport Road Louisville, KY 40242 502-429-4460 On-line https://seeworld.ky.gov

Hours: Monday-Friday 9-5



Provided services to 3,108 consumers in 2008





### **INSIGHT**

In 2008, OFB in partnership with the Big East Educational Cooperative, Kentucky School for the Blind, Morehead University, and the University of Louisville hosted the third annual transition week on the campus of Morehead State University. Nine high school juniors and seniors attended this pre-college specialized program for Blind and Visually Impaired stu-

9 Participants in 2008

dents. The high school students, while on campus at Morehead State, experience for 10 days

many of the challenges encountered when entering a university or community college after graduating from high school. INSIGHT participants gain an increased awareness of the

educational, recreational, and social challenges of a post secondary environment.

# ACCESSIBLE TEXTBOOK PROGRAM

The Accessible Textbook Program maintains the state library of alternative materials and provides services to individuals including elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools. Having textbooks accessible is important for success. Professional training materials are also provided in alternative formats for individuals requiring them in the workplace. An online database catalog of books recorded onto cassette tape or CD can be accessed at http://blind.ky.gov/Public VRULibrarySearch.asp.

Provided services to 186 consumers in 2008

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### **BIOPTIC DRIVING PROGRAM**

This program assists qualifying Kentuckians to regain independence through special training that enables them to obtain a driver's license. As a result, individuals have been able to obtain first-time employment or upgrade to better jobs. Others who were in jeopardy of losing their jobs were able to maintain their employment because they obtained a driver's license. The Bioptic Program is administered by an OFB staff trainer that is a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS).

Provided services

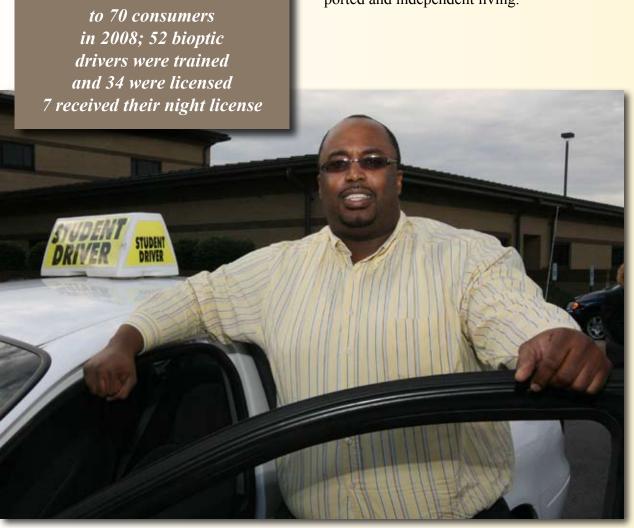
### **DEAF BLIND PROGRAM**

This program is a collaborative partnership between the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and OFB, where both agencies share resources in serving the deaf blind population of Kentucky. The Statewide Deaf Blind Com-

mittee, Expanding Horizons, consists of representatives from different

Provided services to 43 consumers in 2008

agencies across the state that meet to discuss issues related to deaf blindness. Regional Teams across the state work with consumers who are Deaf Blind and Deaf at Rish solving issues such as housing, job placements, supported and independent living.



# Kentucky Business Enterprises



Ray Katon manages the vending/food service facility at the State Transportation Building.

entucky Business Enterprises (KBE) is one of the nation's leading vending and food service programs operated by people who are blind. The program trains and places blind individuals as self-employed operator/managers of snack bars, cafeterias, and automated vending facilities in public and private buildings across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The program also trained, licensed and placed two new vendor managers in 2008.

Provided repair/maintenance and management services to 64 KBE vendor managers in 2008

### STATE COMMITTEE OF BLIND VENDORS 2007/2008

Charles Allen—Chair Roger Wheatley
Mac Carnes—Vice Chair Randy Hester
Brice Howard Glenn White
Mike Hartsock Jerry Grimes
George Stokes Tim Davis



# KY Assistive Technology Service (KATS) Network

KATS Network is the Kentucky Assistive Technology project operating within its lead agency, the Office for the Blind. Funded through the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, the KATS Network consists of a statewide network of organizations and individuals connecting to enhance the availability of assistive technology. The Mission of this collaborative system is to make assistive technology information, devices and services easily obtainable for people of any age and/or disability. In addition to the Coordinating Center located in the McDowell Center in Louisville, there are four AT regional resources centers:

- Bluegrass Technology Center—Lexington,
- pt enTECH at Spalding University—Louisville,
- Redwood Rehab Center—Ft. Mitchell,
- WKATC at Wendell Foster's Campus—Owensboro,
- and two partner centers in the Appalachia Region.

Visit KATS online at http://www.katsnet.org or call (800) 3275287.

### Here's what we accomplished in 2008:

- 1,022 AT Demonstrations
- 4,138 Training Participants
- 864 AT Devices Reutilized, at a savings of \$185,067
- 5,635 AT Equipment, Devices, and Materials Loaned
- 10,629 Information, Assistance and Referrals
- 22,288 Total Direct Services Provided
- 779,857 Individuals were reached through Public Awareness Activities

### enTECH at Spalding University in Louisville is one of the KATS Network's Regional Assistive Technology Resource Centers:

enTECH at Spalding University has a fully equipped Computer Lab with Large Keyboards, Touch Screen Monitors, Screen Magnification, Speech Output Devices and Screen Reading Software, and a multitude of other adaptive software.

There is also a MultiSensory room which provides individuals with primary sensory experiences, which they can manipulate or enjoy passively through auditory, visual, tactile and olfactory stimulation.

enTECH also has a wide range of assistive technology available for First Steps consumers.







# How To Contact Us:

The Kentucky Office for the Blind central office is located in Frankfort. There are also ten field offices located throughout Kentucky. Each field office is staffed with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and other support persons that serve their local geographic area. Every office has a toll free phone number allowing easy and free access to all Kentuckians.

### **CENTRAL OFFICE:**

275 East Main Street Frankfort, KY 40621 502-564-4754 800-321-6668 502-564-2951 FAX http://blind.ky.gov

### FIELD OFFICES

### **Ashland**

411 19th Street Ashland, KY 41101 606-920-2000 or 800-334-6881 606-920-2001 FAX

### **Bowling Green**

400 East Main Street Suite 302 Bowling Green, KY 42101 270-746-7479 or 800-222-1215 270-746-7481 FAX

### Elizabethtown

409 North Miles Street Elizabethtown, KY 42701 270-766-5126 or 800-760-6891 270-766-5125 FAX

### **Florence**

8020 Veterans Memorial Dr. Suite 100 Florence, KY 41042 859-371-3380 or 800-334-6895 859-371-0379 FAX

### Lexington

153 Patchen Dr., Suite 17 Lexington, KY 40517 859-246-2111 or 800-291-8424 859-246-2112 FAX

### Louisville

8412 Westport Road Louisville, KY 40242 502-429-4460 or 800-346-2115 502-429-7101 FAX

### Owensboro

121 East 2nd Street Owensboro, KY 42303 270-687-7306 or 800-334-6929 270-687-7526 FAX

### Paducah

220 North 8th Street Suite E Paducah, KY 42001 270-575-7315 or 800-334-6945 270-575-7987 FAX

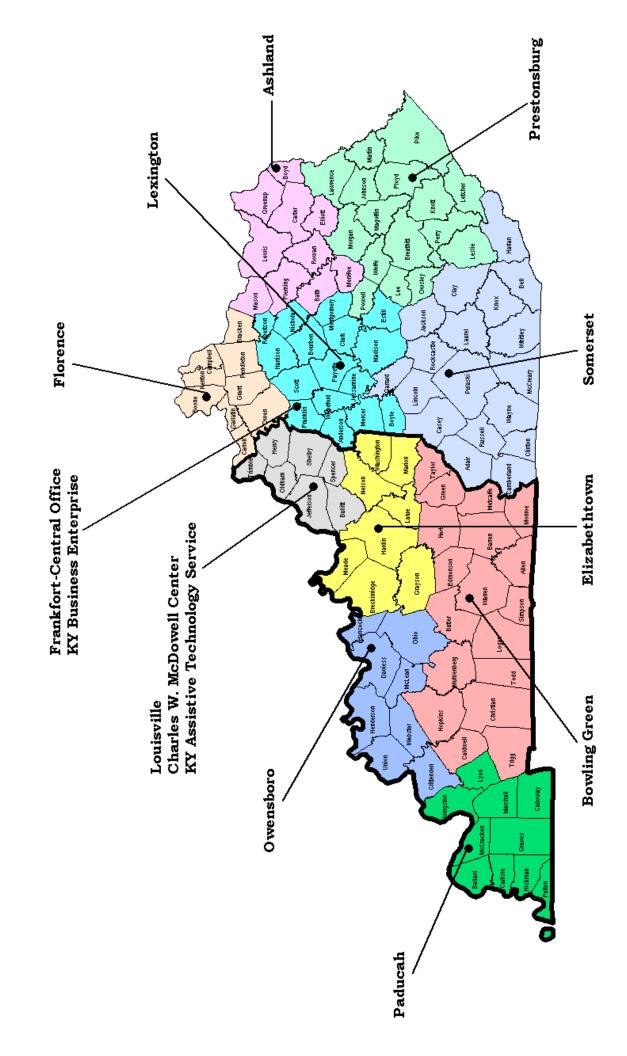
### Prestonsburg

16 Bingham Street Prestonsburg, KY 41653 606-889-1685 or 800-334-6940 606-889-1686 FAX

### Somerset

650 North Main Street Gateway Center, Suite 240 Somerset, KY 42501 606-677-4042 or 800-895-3863 606-677-4043 FAX

# KENTUCKY OFFICE FOR THE BLIND





### **Kentucky Office for the Blind**

275 East Main Street Frankfort, KY 40621 (800) 321-6668 http://blind.ky.gov

